

AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT
INCORPORATED

COLLÈGE DE FRANCE
Cabinet d'Egyptologie
Inventaire B 10.495

479 Huntington Avenue
Boston 15, Massachusetts
July, 1957

NEWSLETTER NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE

The following letter from Edward F. Wente, his last report of the present season, was written shortly before he left Cairo for the United States.

Cairo, Egypt
June 26, 1957

Dear Members:

Last week occurred a rather unfortunate incident which has received widespread publicity in the Egyptian papers. Dr. Charles A. Muses of the Falcon's Wings Press, who had been excavating at Dahshur in the area south of the Amenemhet III pyramid, was arrested at the Cairo airport charged with attempting to smuggle from the country antiquities and undeclared money. At the moment he is in the hospital following a nervous collapse at the time of his arrest, and the police are engaged in probing the matter. Professor Selim Hassan has been assigned to evaluate and determine the provenience of the objects in Dr. Muses' possession. *

Several weeks ago Dr. Muses had the fortune of discovering the remains of a new pyramid at Dahshur. At that time I was informed that the discovery included a sarcophagus and canopic equipment of unusual design, the canopic chest actually forming part of the body of the sarcophagus and located at one end of it; the jars, as usual, had lids representing the four sons of Horus.

Yesterday I talked with Professor Sami Gabra, who, being scientific supervisor of the Muses' expedition, has been involved in the recent investigation. Contrary to newspaper reports, the finds from Dahshur are minor; the pyramid had been pillaged in antiquity and the burial equipment was badly broken. Reports that Dr. Muses was carrying off gold leaf and papyri from the tomb have been greatly exaggerated.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the discovery is the occurrence in three places on the canopic equipment of the name of a hitherto unknown king, Amenayau, who is probably to be assigned to the Thirteenth Dynasty. Professor Gabra is of the opinion that the name should be read Ameny, the Nubian, and that the person who bore it was not a king but a prince, since he had not the title, "King of Upper and Lower Egypt," but only that of "King of Upper Egypt."

*Recent reports are that Dr. Muses has been released and has left Egypt. - Ed.



I myself am of the opinion that the title nswt, King of Upper Egypt, can designate a true king; indeed, on the canopic chest of Sobekemsaf II, the king is also referred to only as King of Upper Egypt. Moreover, though I have unfortunately not seen the inscriptions, I should judge from the information available to me that the reading of the name as Ameny disregards the W-chick with which it is written (which, incidentally, is legless), and that therefore the name Amenyau seems preferable.

This month the German Institute has finally solved the problem of forming a library to replace the collection confiscated during the war. Professor Louis Keimer, who has been suffering from a serious illness, has sold his large library to the Institute. It is gratifying to see his collection remain as a unit and not dispersed, as has so often been the fate of privately owned libraries.

Recent discoveries have added greatly to our knowledge of Cairo in the early Islamic period. Until a short time ago, the location of the earliest walls bounding the east side of the city has been conjectural. On Professor Creswell's map of Cairo, the eastern section of the walls of Gawhar were tentatively located a considerable distance west of those of Salah ad Din, but in the course of the clearing by the Cairo municipality of the tremendous mounds of sebakh, those ancient rubbish heaps that, because of their size, appear from a distance to be natural formations, sections of both older and later walls have been found, together with a gateway of Badr al Gamali (1074-1094 A.D.) -- the first Bab al Barqiya.

Before describing these discoveries I should perhaps mention that the excavations were not prompted by the desire to uncover an unknown section of the old city wall: the municipality began clearing away the rubbish heaps to reclaim land for modern housing, and it was only accidentally that the ruins of the old fortifications came to light. Some damage was done to well-preserved sections of crenelated walls by trucks backing up to receive debris, but Professor Creswell, realizing the importance of the area, has been responsible for protecting the ancient remains. More care is now being taken with the clearing and the municipality has agreed to leave a wide space on both sides of the walls free from the encroachment of modern building.

The distance between the walls of Gawhar and those of Salah ad Din at a point directly east of the Al Azhar mosque is approximately 14 metres, and at this location has been unearthed the gate of Badr al Gamali, built of limestone and probably originally flanked with towers, inserted into the mud-brick walls of Gawhar. Ancient quarry markings indicate that the stone was obtained from Pharaonic buildings. The parallel cutting of the upper and lower surfaces of the blocks and the excellent quality of the limestone are to be noted. Professor Creswell

believes that, as digging proceeds, there may likely be found a granite sill, perhaps with hieroglyphic inscriptions, as has been the case in other structures of Badr al Gamali.

A kufic inscription on the east face of the gate dates it to the year 1087 A.D. The arches are pointed. The better preserved east face shows a large pointed arch with a lintel below it, making the actual entrance rectangular. A series of openings penetrating the ceiling of the entrance passage made it possible for the defenders to drop missiles on invaders trying to force a way into the city. The west side of the gate is not so well preserved, for the great weight of the sebakh has not only weakened the structure but has even in some places crushed the stones of which it is built. Enough remains, however, to show that this first Bab al Barqiya is a beautiful example of Fatimid masonry; the joints are carefully made, the edges of the blocks bevelled to avoid chipping in handling. A crenelated parapet originally topped the gate.

Fourteen meters to the east are the less substantial constructions of the wall of Salah ad Din, which was originally planned to extend south of the Citadel but was never completed. Here nummulitic limestone blocks of small size have been employed. As a result of the crumbling of the mortar that was used between blocks, of which the upper and lower surfaces were not cut parallel, the sides of the tower incline inward. At various intervals south of this point, sections of the crenelated wall of Salah ad Din have come to view.

As an Egyptologist looking over these comparatively late remains, I have been struck by the size of the mounds of sebakh deposited in the area over a relatively short span of time, probably 500 years. Nowhere else in Egypt have I come across such a huge accumulation of refuse. It might well be possible to draw some conclusion about the size of cities in ancient Egypt from the dumps that remain. The cities of antiquity were probably not very large; they were certainly not primarily mercantile centers as was Cairo. The predominant mode of life was agricultural, with the inhabitants leaving the city each morning to work in the fields.

Edward F. Wente

Professor Henry Fischer of Yale University, a Trustee of the Center, who spent the past season in Egypt and Europe, writes of a new discovery in the Theban necropolis as follows:

"Just before leaving Thebes, when it was almost too late to do anything about it, I came across a new Old Kingdom tomb in the Theban necropolis. Mr. Wente kindly came to my assistance and gave me a hand in making a rough plan of the tomb and otherwise recording what remains of the paintings and inscriptions. The tomb is to be assigned the number 405. The iconography of the scenes contains nothing out of the ordinary, but the plan is interesting in that it resembles that of contemporary tombs at Assouan; specifically it recalls the double tomb of Mekhu and Sabni,

for it is connected by a passageway, albeit a small one, with the previously published tomb of Ihy (No. 186) and it is clear that the two belong to father and son. Khenty, the owner of the new tomb, is either to be identified as Ihy's eldest son or as his father."

The following offprints have recently been received by the Executive Secretary from Professor Richard A. Parker, Membership Secretary of the Center:

"A Late Coptic Memorial Tablet", from Revue d'égyptologie, 11, 1957, p. 161-163. A note, with transcription and translation, of a Bohairic monument, the interest of which, to use the words of the author, "lies in its late date (A.D. 1397, the excellence of its script, and the biographical details, so lacking in all earlier epitaphs."

"The Length of Reign of Ramses X," from Revue d'égyptologie 11, 1957, p.163-164.

"The Problem of the Month-Names: a Reply," from Revue d'égyptologie 11, 1957. A reply to Sir Alan Gardiner's criticism of the author's monograph, The Calendars of Ancient Egypt, Chicago, 1957.

"The Lunar Dates of Thutmose III and Ramesses II," from Journaal of Near Eastern Studies, XVI, 1957, p.39-43.

"Some Considerations of the Nature of the Fifth-Century Jewish Calendar at Elephantine," from Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XIV, 1955, p.271-274. A criticism of the conclusions of S.H. Horn and L.H. Wood in their article on the Elephantine calendar in JNES XIII, 1954, p.1-20.

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